



## GOVERNOR'S STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL

dedicated to building a strong STEM education foundation for all Iowans

### Iowa Governors STEM Advisory Council Meeting April 20, 2023

#### Discussion Outcomes: STEM Council Merger to the Iowa Department of Education (3 parts)

##### 1. Opportunities foreseen by members of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council regarding merger to Iowa Department of Education

*(A compilation. Original data set available upon request)*

- 1) Broadened connection of schools to communities through direct lines of IDE;
- 2) More integration of STEM into classrooms;
- 3) More STEM endorsements pursued by teachers;
- 4) ICAP plans could get better aligned to WBL and STEM;
- 5) More equitable access to STEM opportunities;
- 6) Institutionalize STEM Council for greater reach, expanded resources;
- 7) Formalized connections to other government agencies;
- 8) More accessible communications to Iowa educators;
- 9) Improved means for streamlining business/industry relationships with schools;
- 10) Possible elevation of STEM mission in the eyes of funders/donors;
- 11) Greater impact on the production of STEM teachers;
- 12) Connecting STEM more to other disciplines – further engage IDE across offices;
- 13) A re-set opportunity for STEM – priorities and programs;
- 14) Chance for IDE to redistribute offices such as CTE and WBL into Innovation;
- 15) Teacher retention in STEM could be a new priority;
- 16) Elevate STEM offerings across the broader domain of IDE;
- 17) Align and coordinate STEM with the other initiatives of IDE;
- 18) Broader communications;
- 19) Enhanced coordination with AEAs and Regional STEM Networks.

##### 2. Advice for taking full advantage of those Opportunities

*(A compilation. Original data set available upon request)*

- 1) Make known our ideas and priorities to others at IDE;
- 2) Expand on out-of-classroom activities;
- 3) Get the good news out to educator lists;
- 4) Connect to the professional organizations that teachers belong to;
- 5) Get STEM opportunities into the hands of more teachers;

- 6) Expand the clientele beyond just STEM teachers – span the disciplines;
- 7) Connect the divisions/sections/offices across IDE;
- 8) Set SMART goals;
- 9) Learn from other departments such as IVRS and Culture Affairs how to manage;
- 10) Establish clear roles, responsibilities, goals;
- 11) Beware misperceptions regarding funding for STEM (does not pull \$ from schools);
- 12) Stay nonpartisan on Council, regional boards;
- 13) Stay positive, persistent, flexible, communicating, and give grace;
- 14) Protect the nimble mode of operation that is STEM;
- 15) Engage in IDE activities and programs to the fullest;
- 16) Keep/build on the STEM priority of the Governor and position STEM as priority at IDE;
- 17) Be careful not to grow too fast or broad until additional staffing/resources are brought in;
- 18) Bring the friends/partners/investors of STEM into the IDE.

### 3. **Questions and concerns voiced by members of the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council regarding merger to Iowa Department of Education**

*(A compilation. Original data set available upon request)*

#### **Answers provided by Jeff Weld and Jane Dufoe**

1. Will STEM Council mission and actions be preserved?  
ANSWER: Yes. Not only preserved but expanded and enhanced.
2. Will the Council continue and its voice carry sway?  
ANSWER: Yes. The STEM Council will remain. The guidance of the Council will remain as valuable in charting a course for STEM in Iowa as it ever has.
3. Will corporate and philanthropic giving to Council programming continue?  
ANSWER: Yes. Donations and investments made to STEM will continue to be invited, welcome, and cherished.
4. Will existing programs be affected?  
ANSWER: Current STEM programs have distinguished themselves as impactful and effective. Not only will they remain active, but their growth and expansion will be encouraged and supported.
5. Will there be a possible expansion of funding for additional programming? (Federal or IDE)  
ANSWER: Grant funding will continue to be encouraged of the Innovation Division to support STEM programming. There is every possibility that the Department will provide resources as well for creating/expanding innovative education solutions driven by STEM.
6. What changes are in store for business operations?  
ANSWER: We expect no noticeable changes to business operations (invoices, contracts, payments, etc.). However, new offices, protocols, and procedures are being adopted and adapted to by the STEM staff, who’ll be supported by peer professionals at the Department.
7. Will the STEM team be free to self-manage?  
ANSWER: The STEM team will occupy and administer the new Innovation Division at the Department. The opportunity to define and execute essential roles of the Division will be provided to the STEM team in close collaboration with Department leadership. The fulfillment of the roles defined will be a self-managed endeavor of the STEM team.

8. For how many years will STEM continue to be part of the IDE?  
ANSWER: STEM education is an essential aspect of a well-rounded and future-focused preK-12 learning experience for all young Iowans. There is not an imaginable time when that would not be the case.
9. Will process efficiency (e.g., administering STEM BEST, Scale-Up, etc.) be affected?  
ANSWER: Every effort is being taken in the lead-up to July 1 to prepare for the smooth transition of STEM to the Department. Everyone involved prioritizes a seamless and efficient process transition.
10. What are the goals of the merger? Benefits?  
ANSWER: Smaller, more efficient state government is Governor Reynolds' goal for the overall re-alignment underway, of which STEM is just one small part. Specifically regarding STEM merging with the Department of Education, not only is efficiency likely to be improved, but reach and impact are potentially likely to increase significantly. The benefits are a two-way street as well: not only does STEM stand to benefit, but the Department stands to learn and grow by the example and the guidance brought by the STEM organization, potentially contributing to a leaner, more nimble, and innovative Department of Education.
11. How will communications with organizational peers and partners change?  
ANSWER: The inter-organizational communication essential to STEM – other state agencies, the business sector, trade and professional groups, preK-12 public and private schools, nonformal education entities, local and state government officials, etc., will remain uninhibited.
12. Will this merger open the door to business voice and engagement at the IDE?  
ANSWER: One of the many opportunities woven into this merger is the introduction, and in some instances the expansion, of the business voice and presence at the Department of Education, brought about by the deep and influential partnerships established by STEM over the years.
13. Will Governor continue to co-chair and support STEM?  
ANSWER: Governor Reynolds believes STEM education to be an important aspect of preK-12 education in Iowa and a prominent educational vehicle for driving school-business partnerships. Therefore, she intends to continue to co-chair the Council and support STEM at every opportunity.
14. How will this change decision-making regarding priorities, staffing, etc.?  
ANSWER: Currently, decision-making within the STEM organization resides with the co-chairs ultimately, in consult with the executive committee and the executive director who represents the network team. Moving forward, each of those organizational structures and functions remains in place. As a new Innovation Division within the Department, new roles and priorities will also be part of the portfolio for the Division's chief and staff, in close collaboration with the Department Director and leadership team.
15. To whom will the executive director report?  
ANSWER: The executive director will be the chief of the Innovation Division beginning July 1, continuing to consult with STEM Council co-chairs on matters of STEM while reporting to the Director of the Department of Education on matters of the Innovation Division.
16. Will STEM annual metrics now be included in the annual IDE report to the legislature?

ANSWER: Yes. Moving forward, annual indicators of change (growth or decline) in STEM performance, interest, community support, etc., will become part of the annual Departmental report to the state legislature.

17. Will STEM be advocated for by the IDE lobbyist?

ANSWER: As a division of the Department, the services provided to the Department and its divisions including state governmental relations, will be provided for STEM/Innovation.

18. Is STEM more, or less, stable and secure at the IDE?

ANSWER: Given that STEM will now be within a Division at the Iowa Department of Education, it will be as stable and secure as any Division within the Department.

19. Will STEM still have its own distinct budget line?

ANSWER: Yes. The annual appropriation for STEM remains unchanged for FY24 as its own distinct budget line. In the years to come, just as in years past, that appropriation is subject to change based on the priorities of the legislature.

20. What about the regional hubs/networks?

ANSWER: The legislation dictating the terms of the merger of STEM to the Department specifically codify the continuation in their current form with their current responsibilities, the regional STEM Hubs and network.

21. What changes are envisioned for the operations staff?

ANSWER: No changes are envisioned for the operations staff except for the change in employment from Regents employees to Department of Education employees. They will remain housed at UNI via a memorandum of understanding between the university and the Department.

22. Will brand/logo and identity of STEM be preserved?

ANSWER: The widely recognized and respected brand, logo, and identity of STEM will remain unchanged this year as an important sign of educational excellence driving innovation at the Department, though the State of Iowa plans for the rebranding all agencies within the year to come.

23. Why blend STEM with "Innovation" rather than let STEM stand alone?

ANSWER: Much of the work and the history of STEM in Iowa has driven innovations that have spread and permeated the education landscape, such as school-business partnerships, work-based learning, community collaboration, and leading-edge curricula and training. While STEM retains brand and mission, housing within the Innovation Division sets the table for due influence on the entire spectrum of education – across subject areas, grade bands, teacher preparation, community engagement, etc.

24. Is there a succession plan to secure Iowa STEM beyond this governor and this executive director?

ANSWER: Now that STEM/Innovation will be within the Department of Education, the security of programs of excellence is more assured. The same is true for staffing and succession: more people and systems of support assure less turbulence upon the departure of individuals, whether at the director or manager levels.